

3rd Sunday of Easter – Luke 24:35-48

A nurse in training went to one of her classes one day. The professor announced that there would be a pop quiz. She breezed through the questions, until she came to the last question. The last question was this: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans this building?" She thought it must be some kind of a joke. Whoever heard of that kind of a question on a test? She had seen the cleaning woman. She could describe her physically, but why should she know her name? She handed in her test, leaving the last question unanswered. She asked the professor, "Are you going to count that last question on the final score?" "Absolutely," said the professor, "In your careers you are going to meet many people. Each one is significant. Each person deserves your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello." Today's gospel reminds us that for the risen Lord, each of his apostles was important.

Peace be with you....and they were startled and terrified, and thought they were seeing a ghost. A common reaction to a very uncommon situation.

But you might say...Weren't they just discussing Jesus making himself **KNOWN** to them in the breaking of bread.

So then the question arises....**HOW** did they know Jesus?

St. Thomas tells us that there are two ways to know something....The way of the Philosopher and the way of the Saint.

The way of the Philosopher is one in which knowledge is obtained **ABOUT** a thing.

We gain this type of knowledge by analysis...by breaking down the thing we want to know into various component parts....asking how does it work?....we come to know its goal or function.

This knowing is gained from a distance. We hold the thing away from us to gain different perspectives. This we would call **objective knowledge** because we remove ourselves as much as possible.

The way of the Saint, on the other hand, is to come to know a thing by participation in its being....This is the way of love.

This type of knowing calls for involvement, commitment and care....We don't break the thing down or keep our distance, rather we seek to learn its wholeness.

This knowing calls for patience....We don't try to manipulate, rather we wait for it to reveal itself as it is.

All this may sound rather abstract...However it is very concrete....in fact this is how we operate in our everyday life. Take for example the two ways of knowing a friend.

One, we can know **ABOUT** them....what makes them tick or what buttons to push to get them going.

But there is always a significant part of them that we never know. We too resent being known in this manner....We feel we are being inspected....like a specimen under the microscope.

By contrast there is the knowledge revealed through LOVE....We don't seek to manipulate or to control the other.

Love creates an environment which communicates to the other that they can be seen **AS THEY ARE** and not be rejected, ridiculed or made to feel unworthy.

Jesus says to His disciples...Why are you troubled? See my hands and my feet. It is I!

In our relationship with Jesus Christ we can **KNOW** a great deal **ABOUT** Jesus....We can read books, take theology classes and attend spiritual conferences....However all this knowledge does **NOT** guarantee that we will **KNOW** him.

I'm not professing some anti-intellectualism, but I am saying that **TO KNOW** Jesus our relationship requires more than the knowledge of the Philosopher and the Theologian.

St. Luke shows the inadequacy of simply knowing a great deal **ABOUT** Jesus....During times of great stress and fear our knowledge **ABOUT** Jesus provides us little if any guidance and support as we can see by the reaction of the disciples....they were terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost.

You see, the Disciples were locked, literally, into their own limited vision and they forgot the promises of Jesus....They forgot the necessity of the Cross.

It was to the Cross that all the Scriptures looked forward. The Cross was not forced on God. It was **NOT** some emergency measure He had to revert to when all else failed. The Cross was part of God's plan, for it is the one place on earth, where in a moment of time, we can see God's eternal love.

Jesus appears to them in their locked room and says, "Peace be with you."....The Jesus who died was in truth the Christ who rose again.

This is the message of Easter...The Good News of the Gospel...Jesus breaks into our world of self-contained and limited visions, because the Church was **NOT** left to live forever behind locked doors. It was sent out into the world.

It's not surprising that the Disciples were startled and terrified, for they were being called to lose their knowledge **ABOUT** Jesus and find a new life **IN** Jesus.

The title of one of my favorite books by Father Anthony DeMello is "The Song of The Bird." It comes from a story about the disciples of God who were full of questions about God.

The Master said, God is unknown and the unknowable....Every statement made about Him, every answer to your questions, is a distortion of the Truth....The disciples were bewildered and said....Why then do you speak about Him at all?

The Master responded, Why does the bird sing?

You see birds **do not** sing because they have a statement to make **ABOUT** something....rather they sing because they have a song.

And Jesus appeared to his disciples and said.....**Peace be with you. AMEN!**